



Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard

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Methamphetamine Fact Sheet

What is Meth?

- A cheap, powerful, highly addictive stimulant that impacts the central nervous system
- A Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substance Act with little medical use and a high potential for abuse
- Causes temporary euphoria and increased energy for as long as 6 hours per high
- Side effects: sleeplessness, permanent brain damage, paranoia, violent behavior

Where does Meth come from?

- Small meth labs are being found in houses, apartments, hotel rooms, and trailers in epidemic proportions
- Meth can be made in a few hours by illegally combining pseudoephedrine with other household products
- Over the course of a year, the typical meth cook will teach at least ten others how to make meth
- The typical meth lab cooker produces 48 to 72 times a year, creating the possibility for caustic and explosive reactions each time

Precursor Chemicals

- Pseudoephedrine is the *one* chemical necessary to make meth
- Precursor chemical laws have been credited in reducing the number of meth lab seizures in Oklahoma by **80-90 percent**
- Multiple states have passed comprehensive laws like Oklahoma's and are seeing similar success

Risks from Meth

- Meth addicts turn to crime and prostitution to support their habits, especially ID theft, forgery and robbery
- Due to the flammable nature of the chemicals used in cooking meth, fires and explosions are common
- Production of meth exposes children, first responders and others to toxic gases and hazardous chemicals
- 51 percent of injuries at meth labs happen to first responders, according to the Centers for Disease Control
- Each pound of meth produced leaves behind an estimated 5-7 pounds of toxic waste

Arizona Experience with the Clandestine Meth Lab Problem over the Past Four Years

- 1,263 meth production related seizures
- 362 children rescued from meth labs
- Disposal costs for gross contamination associated with meth labs totaled nearly \$4 million
- 42% of adult females and 38% of adult males arrested in the Phoenix area in 2003 tested positive for meth
- Arizona spends millions of tax dollars catching, incarcerating and caring for the children of meth users

Impact of Meth Labs on Arizona Children

- Arizona leads the nation in meth use among children between 12 and 17 (U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona)
- A total of 139 cases involving 268 children were investigated by law enforcement and CPS since the Meth & Kids Initiative was started in 2000. CPS took 81 percent (218) of the children into temporary custody at the crime scene
- Between 2000 and 2002, 33 percent of children found at meth labs tested positive for meth
- About 30-35 percent of labs seized are residences with children
- Prenatal exposure to meth causes infants to be six times more likely to be born with birth defects such as spina bifida, club foot, intestinal abnormalities, and skeletal abnormalities
- Exposure to meth chemicals that have caught fire, exploded, or created clouds of toxic gas have caused serious health problems, including chemical burns, respiratory problems, lung and tissue damage, and brain toxicity in children
- Meth cookers often have guns, other weapons and booby-traps to protect their drugs and labs, posing a serious safety risk for children in the home
- Children found in meth labs often suffer from developmental delays and have likely been abused or neglected
- Justice Department statistics show that neglected or abused children are
 - 50 percent more likely to be arrested as juveniles
 - 40 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime as adults and
 - 33 percent more likely to be substance abusers